



## NCHS Data on Multiple Sclerosis

### About NCHS

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides multiple perspectives to help understand the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

### Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic neurologic condition that is generally diagnosed in early adulthood. National Health Interview Survey data from the early 1990s indicated that less than 0.1 percent of Americans had this condition.

The prevalence of multiple sclerosis is relatively small, yet a substantial percent of those who have the disease seek health care. Women are more likely to bear the burden of this condition. National data on multiple sclerosis can be obtained for health care utilization and mortality.

### Key Findings

#### Health care utilization

- In 1999-2000, there were approximately 700,000 doctor visits each year that included a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.
- In 1999-2000, 24,000 annual hospitalizations listed multiple sclerosis as the first diagnosis. Nearly 63,000 other hospitalizations listed it as an additional diagnosis.
- Females accounted for 75 percent of all hospitalizations that mentioned multiple sclerosis.

#### Mortality among adults ( $\geq 25$ years old)

- In 2000, there were 2,840 adult deaths due to multiple sclerosis.
- The age-adjusted death rate for multiple sclerosis among adult women was higher than for adult men, 1.9 versus 1.2 per 100,000, respectively in 2000.
- The age-adjusted death rate for multiple sclerosis was similar for whites and blacks (1.7 versus 1.6 per 100,000, respectively) in 2000.
- The age-adjusted death rate for multiple sclerosis among U.S. adults increased by more than 25 percent over the last two decades. In 2000, the death rate was 1.6 per 100,000 adults.

## Multiple Sclerosis Data Sources

NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. They include:

- **National Health Interview Survey** – obtains information on the nation's health status through confidential household interviews that measure: health status and disability, insurance coverage, access to care, use of health services, immunizations (child), health behaviors, injury, and the ability to perform daily activities. This survey provides information on the number of people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>
- **National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey** - conducts surveys of private physician offices to obtain nationally representative information about health care visits including patient demographics, patient complaints, physician diagnoses and prescription medications. This survey provides information on visits to physician offices involving multiple sclerosis.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/ahcd/namcsdes.htm>
- **National Hospital Discharge Survey** - is a national probability survey designed to meet the need for information on characteristics of inpatients discharged from non-Federal short-stay hospitals in the United States. The survey data include hospitalizations for multiple sclerosis.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/hdasd/nhds.htm>
- **National Vital Statistics System** – collects mortality information from death certificates in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, including characteristics of the decedent and underlying and contributing causes of death. Multiple sclerosis death rates are available from this data system.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm>

For further information about NCHS and its programs, visit us at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>, or call the Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation at 301-458-4100.